Keeping in touch

News and notes from
the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

December 1992

UFMCC Protests National Council

UFMCC led a dramatic demonstration at the National Council of Churches meeting Nov. 12 in Cleveland, OH, after the NCC voted 90-81 to take no action on UFMCC's request for observer status.

"It's easier to get into heaven than into the NCC!" Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, UFMCC's chief ecumenical officer, said in a speech that began a 90-minute demonstration.

"Gay and lesbian people are dying — from AIDS, from suicides, from gay bashing. The NCC and its member communions are contributing to a climate of hatred and rejection of gay men and lesbians by their action today," she said, banging her fist on the podium so hard that it cracked.

Then leadership from UFMCC and approximately 15 other lesbian/gay affirming Christian organizations carried in banners and took charge of the microphones, while most NCC General Board members stayed to hear stories of the pain and anger experienced by lesbian and gay people of faith.

Protestors at the NCC meeting included, from left, Mr. John Taktikos of Axios, Rev. Nancy Wilson of UFMCC, and Ms. Lorna Cramer of Unitarian Universalists for Lesbian / Gay Concerns.
Photo by Kittredge Cherry

UFMCC members who spoke were Rev. Kit Cherry, field director of ecumenical witness and ministry; Ms. Judy Dale, Great Lakes district coordinator; Mr. Larry Young representing the Department of People of Colors; Rev. Peter Trabaris, Joy of Life MCC, N. Chicago, IL; and Rev. Paul Turner, MCC Toledo, OH.

The report passed by the NCC recommended no action because the organization's "very existence... is at stake." An NCC press release issued after the vote described it as "one of the most painful decisions in its 42-year history."

The NCC also recommended a meeting between UFMCC leaders and the NCC Membership Committee, but Rev. Wilson said such discussions would be pointless.

On the following day, the NCC unanimously passed a resolution opposing the ballot measure passed in Colorado that prohibits anti-discrimination protection for lesbian and gay men.

Other groups represented at the NCC General Board and at Nov. 10 meeting of national leadership of lesbian/gay affirming Christian groups were: Affirmation (United Methodist), American Baptists Concerned, Axios (Eastern Orthodox), Brethren/Mennonite Council, Friends for Lesbian/Gay Concerns, Gay/Lesbian

(see Protest, page 4)

Lesbian/Gay Victories Won in U.S. Election

Many in the lesbian and gay community rejoiced Nov. 3 at the results of the U.S. election, especially the victory of gay/lesbian rights advocate Bill Clinton as president.

However, there were some defeats for lesbian and gay rights, too, in a year which marked the first time that lesbian and gay issues figured prominently in a U.S. presidential election.

"I am absolutely thrilled at the election of Mr. Clinton as president," said Rev. Elder Troy Perry, UFMCC founder and moderator. "I believe it's going to be a new day for gay and lesbian rights, and for UFMCC's chances to place a gay man or lesbian in the chaplain service of the U.S. military. I was delighted to see that in his victory speech he placed AIDS funding at the top of the list in his priorities."

Voters in Oregon rejected by 56 to 44 percent a ballot measure to denounce homosexuality as "abnormal" and "perverse," allow discrimination against gay men and lesbians, and require state and local governments to take steps to discourage homosexuality.

In Portland, ME, a measure to repeal a local gay and lesbian rights ordinance failed 57-43.

Before the election, there were 64 openly lesbian and gay elected officials in the States, according to the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund. A total of 16 won re-election, plus 11 others won for the first time, bringing the total to 75.

(see Lesbian / Gay Victories, page 2)

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

From the Staff at Headquarters

Pictured in front of the office building where UFMCC is based are, from left: front row, Mr. Gene Van Horn, Ms. D.J. Bowling, Mr. Frank Zerilli, Rev. Ro Halford; second row, Ms. Nancy Fackrell, Rev. Stephen Pieters, Rev. Kit Cherry; third row, Mr. Troy Fernandez, Mr. Dave Martin, Mr. Ravi Verma; fourth row, Mr. Nathan Meckley, Mr. Farley Peterson; top row, Rev. Elder Don Eastman, Rev. Elder Troy Perry, and Mr. Erik Topp. Not pictured is Rev. Bob Arthur. ❐

From Rev. Elder Troy Perry, UFMCC Founder and Moderator

It is with much rejoicing that we enter the Christmas season and prepare to rejoice even as the angels did: Hosanna, the Christ is come!

Christmas has always been a time for me when I stop and thank God again for sending Jesus. It is that time when I look back over this last year and rejoice over the many wonderful things that have happened to the UFMCC. This has been an exciting year for us — a year of growth, a year of joy and a year of sorrow. At Christmas I always remember those who have left this present life to go into eternal life. It is a time when I remember, with sorrow, those who are still ill. I am also saddened by some recent actions by church officials who claim to follow Christ, including the National Council of Churches' decision not to act on our request for observer status and the Presbyterian Church's ruling to bar Rev. Jane Spahr from pastoring because she is lesbian.

It is a time of joy when I remember that even in our sorrow, God gives us the gift of healing. I rejoice that the Church of England decided to ordain women as priests. It is a time of joy for me as I remember the recent elections, the defeat of anti-gay legislation in Oregon and Portland, ME, and a time of sorrow as I share the bitterness with my sisters and brothers in Colorado and Tampa, FL.

Whatever we do, we know as we celebrate Christmas, we celebrate a new beginning. This Christmas we should view our lives not in despair, but with courage as we remember the words of the prophet, "Behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world." ❐

Lesbian/Gay Victories

(continued from page 1)

On the other hand, Colorado voters passed a ban on local anti-discrimination laws that specifically protect gay men and lesbians. The measure, which won 54-36, overrides gay and lesbian rights ordinances in Denver, Aspen and Boulder. In Tampa, FL, the repeal of a gay and lesbian rights ordinance passed 58-42.

In other issues of Fellowship-wide import, voters in Arizona decided to make Martin Luther King Day an official holiday. Arizona's position on Martin Luther King Day was the major objection to holding General Conference in Phoenix, AZ.

The state of California made history by electing two women Senators, Ms. Dianne Feinstein and Ms. Barbara Boxer.

"I'm also delighted that Ms. Dianne Feinstein won the election," Rev. Perry said. "Dianne and I have maintained our friendship since we first met 18 years ago in San Francisco when she contributed the first building fund money to MCC San Francisco after the fire there. Because our headquarters are located in California, she will be invaluable to the UFMCC as we deal with the U.S. government over immigration and other problems that arise from being an international denomination."

Before the election, Mr. Clinton sent the following letter to UFMCC: "I've been humbled and also thrilled by the tremendous outpouring of support and enthusiasm from across America. People are ready for leadership that puts people first — for a change. Al Gore and I are doing everything we can to carry our message to all Americans." ❐

Keeping in Touch is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation.

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Rev. Kittredge Cherry, Editor

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Around The Fellowship

Praises

Dec. 3 marks the anniversary of the first Holy Union ever performed in UFMCC. **Rev. Elder Troy Perry** officiated at the ceremony, which joined two Mexican American men on Dec. 3, 1968, in Los Angeles, CA.

"Celebrating the Gifts of Asian/Pacific Islander Peoples" was the theme of a special service held Oct. 18 at **MCC Los Angeles**, CA. "This is the first time that a worship service on this theme has happened in UFMCC," said **Rev. Hong Tan**, European North Sea District Coordinator and guest preacher that evening. The service was coordinated by **Mr. Marcel Lope** and **Rev. Kit Cherry.**

The Federal Court of Canada ruled in late October in favor of a lesbian who had been dismissed from the Canadian Air Force in 1989. The Canadian military has agreed to stop discriminating against gays and lesbians.

Rev. Judy Dahl, pastor of **MCC Ventura**, CA, and her twin sister appeared on U.S. national television Oct. 21 when "The Jane Whitney Show" explored whether identical twins share the same sexual orientation.

A tribute to lesbian and gay veterans was held Nov. 7 in Sacramento, CA, cosponsored by the Sacramento Lesbian and Gay Town Council and Twin Spirit Veterans Association, part of the social outreach program at **River City MCC**, Sacramento.❐

Transitions

Rev. Bonnie Daniel was elected pastor of **New Spirit MCC**, Cincinnati, OH, effective May 31, 1993, when her term as Mid-Central District Coordinator ends.

Rev. Michael Niece was called to serve as interim pastor of **JESUS MCC**, Indianapolis, IN. He is a transfer clergy from the United Methodist Church.

MCC Knoxville, TN, installed **Rev. James Richards** of Topeka, KS, as pastor Oct. 18. He is transferring his clergy credentials from the Presbyterian Church.

Rev. Tom Carone is the new assistant pastor at **Good Samaritan Parish MCC**, Toledo, OH.

Rev. Gordon McCoy is the new supervising pastor of **MCC South Suburban Fellowship**, Park Forest, IL.

Rev. David Gillentine has been selected as the pastor of **MCC of the Pomona Valley**, Montclair, CA.

Rev. J. Dwayne Johnson has been approved as pastor of **MCC Richmond**, VA, effective Nov. 1.

Rev. Wally Lanchester retired Oct. 1 as pastor of **MCC in Mt. Vernon**, WA, and **Rev. Marna Montoure** was appointed interim pastor.

Rev. Roy Birchard was appointed interim pastor of **MCC Golden Gate**, San Francisco, CA, following the resignation of **Rev. Buddy Truluck.**

Rev. Gary Wilson resigned recently as pastor of **MCC Portland**, OR. ❐

Prayers

Rev. Elder Willem Hein was hospitalized from Oct. 24 to Nov. 1 in the Netherlands with an undiagnosed illness. He then returned to recuperate at the religious community where he stays when he is in the Netherlands.

Rev. Roberto Gonzalez, pastor of **ICM Buenos Aires**, Argentina and three other leaders of gay/lesbian and transsexual associations, chained themselves to the gates of the Embassy of the Vatican in Argentina on Aug. 21 to protest discrimination against gay men and lesbians.

With World AIDS Day on Dec. 1, prayers are requested for all people affected by HIV, including the following UFMCC clergy: **Rev. Larry Dunlap**, River City MCC, Sacramento, CA; **Rev. Brian Hanlon**, MCC Omaha, NE; **Rev. Cal Lindley**, MCC San Diego, CA; **Rev. Dan Mahoney** and **Rev. Thomas Walker**, MCC Los Angeles, CA. ❐

Top 20 Tithes - Oct. 1992

1.	Church/Holy Spirit MCC, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	US$	2,304.63
2.	MCC Washington, Washington, DC		2,162.23
3.	MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX		2,082.79
4.	MCC Long Beach, Long Beach, CA		1,801.09
5.	MCC Toronto, Ontario, Canada	CAN $	1,370.22
6.	MCC San Francisco, San Francisco, CA		1,306.72
7.	St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville, FL		1,119.25
8.	First MCC of Kansas, Wichita, KS		1,071.11
9.	King of Peace MCC, St. Petersburg, FL		980.60
10.	Agape' MCC, Ft. Worth, TX		961.05
11.	Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota, FL		921.42
12.	River City MCC, Sacramento, CA		869.80
13.	Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton, FL		784.30
14.	MCC New York, New York City, NY		706.79
15.	MCC Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV		612.55
16.	MCC Ocean of Life, Costa Mesa, CA		605.84
17.	MCC in the Valley, N. Hollywood, CA		536.10
18.	MCC Albuquerque, Albuquerque, NM		535.48
19.	MCC of Northern Virginia, Falls Church, VA		529.36
20.	St. Mary's MCC, Greensboro, NC		528.01

{These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's monthly income that is reported to Fellowship headquarters.}

Top 20 Per Capita - Oct. 1992

1.	Maranatha Fellowship MCC, Houston, TX	US$	36.81
2.	MCC Silverlake, Los Angeles, CA		30.90
3.	MCC Ocean of Life, Costa Mesa, CA		28.31
4.	Church of the Resurrection MCC, Chicago, IL		26.71
5.	Christ Covenant MCC, Stone Mountain, GA		25.93
6.	Open Arms MCC, Rochester, NY		25.71
7.	Calvary MCC, Redwood City, CA		24.95
8.	Maranatha MCC, San Lorenzo, CA		23.31
9.	MCC Living Spring, Eureka Springs, AR		23.16
10.	Open Door MCC, Boyds, MD		22.06
11.	MCC of Northern Virginia, Falls Church, VA		22.06
12.	MCC Peoria, Peoria, IL		22.00
13.	MCC of the Living God, Anchorage, AK		21.63
14.	MCC of the Disciples, Washington, DC		21.16
15.	Pikes Peak MCC, Colorado Springs, CO		20.98
16.	Vieux Carre' MCC, New Orleans, LA		20.85
17.	Church With A Vision MCC, Longview, TX		20.33
18.	MCC Long Beach, Long Beach, CA		19.75
19.	New Life MCC, Berkeley, CA		18.89
20.	Faith Eternal MCC, Springfield,IL		18.71

{These figures reflect average individual weekly offering to the local church.}

District Coordinator Elected

Rev. Judy Davenport was elected Southeast District Coordinator at the district conference Nov. 12-14 in Fort Myers, FL.

Beginning Jan. 1, Rev. Davenport will serve a four-year term as district coordinator. She plans to relocate the district office to St. Petersburg, FL.

"There's no question the Southeast District is the strongest district in the Fellowship in terms of church growth and stability," Rev. Davenport said. "I want to pull from the strengths and success of the larger churches and share those resources with the smaller churches." She added that she also intends to find out where new MCC churches need to be started.

Rev. Davenport has 15 years' experience in ministry as pastor, assistant pastor and worship coordinator. She currently serves as assistant district coordinator in the Southwest District and pastor of MCC Albuquerque, NM. She has served previously as district coordinator of the South Central and Southeast Districts. ❐

Classifieds

Events

Charismatic Conference '93 will be held at MCC Long Beach, CA, the weekend of Feb. 12, 13 & 14 focusing on the theme UNITY IN DIVERSITY: "We Are One In The Spirit." In addition to numerous workshops in keeping with the theme, guest speakers include Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson, Rev. Jeri Ann Harvey, Rev. Shelley Hamilton and Rev. Don Pederson. Early registration for the conference prior to Feb. 1, is $40 which includes a continental breakfast and lunch on Sat. Regular registration after Feb. 1 is $45. To register using Visa/Mastercard or for additional information call Rev. Duane Moret at (310) 432-3641.

Mail Order

Special Offer from UFMCC Church Services Department: Order by January 15, 1993, and receive a $5 discount on each of the following:

AT0001: *Not A Sin, Not A Sickness* (four tapes) A sermon series by the Rev. Don Eastman on the Biblical passages used as weapons against the gay community. ($15 special)

WS0020: *The Bible and Homosexuality Set* (from General Conference, 1991) Contains three tapes by Rev. Bob Arthur, dealing with Old and New Testament "clobber passages" and positive gay imagery in the Bible. One other tape by Tom Hanks dealing with sex, the Bible, and ideological fundamentalism. ($20 Special)

Postage is $2.90; CA residents add tax of 8 1/4%. All orders must be pre-paid.

A 1993 liturgical calendar is available now from Rev. Ed Perry, pastor of MCC Tucson, AZ.

Rev. Perry will mail the calendar to anyone who sends a self-addressed, stamped envelope to him at MCC Tucson, 3269 Mountain Ave., N., Tucson, AZ 85719.

Travel

Gay and lesbian Christians will have the opportunity to be baptised in the Jordan River during a tour of the Holy Land March 15-25, 1993. For more information, contact MCC Toronto, (416) 406-6228 or True North, (416) 720-2000.

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Judicial Decision

A UFMCC Judicial Board met in mid-November in Los Angeles, CA, to hear charges that had been filed against Rev. La Paula Turner. The three-member board decided unanimously that Rev. Turner is innocent of all charges filed. ❐

Protest

(continued from page 1)

Affirming Disciples Alliance, Integrity (Episcopal), Presbyterians for Lesbian/Gay Concerns, Unitarian Universalists for Lesbian/Gay Concerns, United Church Coalition for Lesbian/Gay Concerns, and Seventh Day Adventist Kinship International.

The Nov. 10 meeting, chaired by Rev. Cherry, broke new ground by bringing together national leaders of lesbian/gay Christian groups to strategize about NCC relations and other joint projects for 1993-94. ❐

In Memory

Rev. Linda S. Bynum

Rev. Linda S. Bynum, staff clergy at MCC San Antonio, TX, died Nov. 15. She was 46.

Licensed as UFMCC clergy in 1983 and ordained in 1987, Rev. Bynum pastored MCC churches in Lubbock and Odessa, TX, and served as interim pastor in New Orleans, LA. She earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Texas, San Antonio.

She is survived by her spouse, Ms. Ruth Wise; a son, a sister, and numerous nieces and nephews. A memorial service was held at MCC San Antonio on Nov. 21. Memorial gifts may be made to MCC San Antonio, Arthritis Foundation or Heart Foundation.

Rev. David K. Eckert

Rev. David K. Eckert, interim pastor of Delta Harvest MCC, Stockton, CA, died Oct. 25 of non-Hodgkins lymphoma at David Grant Medical Center at Travis Air Force Base, CA. He was 47.

Rev. Eckert was a decorated Air Force pilot who co-founded the Sacramento-based Twin Spirit Veterans Association, a gay and lesbian veterans organization. A 20-year veteran in the Air Force, he was a lieutenant colonel when he retired in 1989. Rev. Eckert earned a Master of Divinity degree from San Francisco Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 1991. He served as student clergy at River City MCC in Sacramento and MCC San Francisco, CA, and was licensed as UFMCC clergy in 1991. He became interim pastor at Delta Harvest MCC in Nov. 1991.

He is survived by his partner, Bill Weaver of San Francisco; his ex-wife, Beverly Eckert of Orangeville, CA; and two daughters.

Memorial gifts may be made to Delta Harvest MCC, Twin Spirit Veterans Association, Sacramento AIDS Foundation, or Sacramento CARES. A memorial service was conducted Nov. 8 at River City MCC.

Rev. Wayne Gollihar

Rev. Wayne Gollihar, who ministered in UFMCC nearly 10 years, died on Oct. 20 of AIDS-related complications. He was 46.

Rev. Gollihar served on the staff of both MCC of Greater Kansas City, MO, and MCC of Johnson County, Shawnee, KS. He was licensed as UFMCC clergy in 1986 and ordained Oct. 5, 1992.

He is a graduate of Central Missouri State University at Warrensburg and the Southern School of Optometry in Memphis, TN. Rev. Gollihar also studied at UFMCC's Samaritan College. He practiced optometry for three years in St. Louis, MO; 10 years in Sunrise Beach, MO; and then moved his practice to Kansas City in 1981. A memorial service was held Nov. 1 at MCC Kansas City.

Mr. Bruce Hill

Mr. Bruce Hill, who held UFMCC clergy credentials from 1976-89, died July 29, 1992, from complications due to AIDS. He was 44.

Mr. Hill served as founding pastor of Calvary MCC in Redwood City, CA, from 1978-84. Then he pastored MCC of the Blessed Redeemer (now known as First MCC of Atlanta, GA) from 1984-87, then pastored the MCC church in Stone Mountain, GA, for less than a year. In 1991 he moved to Alameda, CA, where he worked as a medical transcriber.

He is survived by his friend of many years, Richard Wolf. A memorial service was conducted at Calvary MCC by Rev. Teri Roderick in August. ❐